

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of performing surgery on a patient's knee, the method comprising:

suspending a distal portion of a patient's leg from the knee;

positioning a guide member against the bone;

cutting a bone of the knee with a cutting tool while the distal portion of the patient's leg is suspended from the knee, said step of cutting includes initiating a cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along a guide surface of the guide member to form a cut surface, removing the guide member from against the bone, and then completing a skim cut, while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface; and

positioning a total knee replacement component against the cut bone of the knee,

wherein cutting the bone includes cutting first and second condyles of the bone, [[and]]

wherein the length of the [[completed]] skim cut is at least as long as the distance between the first and second condyles of the bone, and

wherein the skim cut has a dimension in a direction parallel to a central axis of the guide surface which is greater than the distance between opposite ends of the guide member.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein positioning the total knee replacement component includes positioning a first portion of the total knee replacement against the cut bone, and subsequently positioning a second portion of the total knee replacement component against the cut bone.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4 further including the step of connecting the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component after both portions have been positioned against the cut bone.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein suspending the distal portion of the patient's leg from the knee includes bending the knee to a flexed condition, and cutting the bone of the knee includes cutting the bone of the knee while the knee is bent in the flexed condition.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein bending the knee includes hyperflexing the knee, and cutting the bone of the knee includes cutting the bone of the knee while the knee is hyperflexed.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including distracting the knee while the distal portion of the patient's leg is suspended from the knee, and wherein at least one of the steps of cutting the bone and positioning the total knee replacement component is performed while the knee is distracted.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including displacing a patella of the knee.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 further including cutting the patella while the patella is displaced.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the patella is displaced with an inner side of the patella remaining facing inward.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the inner side of the patella remains facing inward during the cutting and positioning steps.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further including everting a patella of the knee.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further including cutting the patella while the patella is everted.

15. (Currently amended) A method of performing surgery on a patient's joint, the method comprising:

positioning a guide member against a bone of the joint, the guide member having a guide surface;

positioning a cutting tool in association with the guide surface of the guide member;

initiating a cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the guide surface to form a cut surface;

removing the guide member from against the bone of the joint;

continuing the cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface, said step of continuing the cut being performed after said step of removing the guide member;

positioning a first portion of a total knee replacement component against the cut bone, and subsequently positioning a second portion of the total knee replacement component against the cut bone; and

connecting the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component after both portions have been positioned against the cut bone, each of the first and second portions of the total knee replacement component having an articulating surface.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including positioning an implant against the cut bone.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein positioning the implant includes positioning first and second portions of the implant against the cut bone.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein positioning first and second portions of the implant includes connecting the first and second portions of the implant.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including suspending a distal portion of a patient's extremity connected with the joint, and initiating the cut and completing the cut are

performed while the distal portion of the patient's extremity connected with the joint is suspended.

20. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including distracting the joint, and wherein at least one of the steps of positioning the guide member, positioning the cutting tool, initiating the cut, and completing the cut is performed with the joint distracted.

21. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein initiating the cut and completing the cut are performed on a condyle of the bone, and further including positioning a partial joint replacement component against the cut condyle of the bone.

22. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein initiating the cut and completing the cut are performed on both condyles of the bone, and further including positioning a total joint replacement component against the cut condyles of the bone.

23. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including completing the cut while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface.

24. (Original) The method of claim 15 further including removing the guide member from the bone before continuing the cut.

25. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the guide surface comprises a guide slot and the step of positioning a cutting tool includes inserting the cutting tool into the guide slot.

26. (Currently amended) A method of performing a total knee arthroplasty surgery on a leg of a patient, the method comprising:

positioning a guide member against a bone of a knee joint in the leg of the patient, the guide member having opposite ends with a transverse dimension which is less than a distance between medial and lateral epicondyles of an end portion of the bone;

positioning a cutting tool in association with a guide surface of the guide member;  
initiating a cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the guide surface to form a cut surface;  
angularly disposing the cutting tool along the guide surface in order to cut a section of the bone wider than the width of the guide; and  
continuing the cut in the bone while guiding the cutting tool along the cut surface,  
wherein both medial and lateral condyles of the end portion of the bone are cut by the cutting tool and wherein the guide member is removed from against the bone of the knee joint prior to said step of continuing the cut in the bone.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 further including positioning an implant against the cut bone.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27 wherein the transverse dimension of the opposite ends of the guide member is less than two-thirds the distance between the medial and lateral epicondyles of the end portion of the bone.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28 wherein the guide member is mounted to the bone and offset from a central longitudinal axis of the bone.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29 wherein the guide member is intramedullary mounted to the bone.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29 wherein the guide member is extramedullary mounted to the bone.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said guide is operative when at least half of the guide body is disposed laterally to a line defining the longitudinal axis of the bone to be cut.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said guide is operative when at least one end is positioned between the skin and the bone to be cut.